

**From:** [Gray, David](#)  
**To:** [Meyer, John](#); [Miller, Garyg](#); [Phillips, Pam](#); [Banipal, Ben](#); [Edlund, Carl](#); [Sanchez, Carlos](#)  
**Subject:** KHOU - San Jacinto River Superfund Site 12/23  
**Date:** Thursday, December 24, 2015 8:12:51 AM

---

<http://www.khou.com/story/news/local/2015/12/23/epa-probes-hole-in-cap-at-superfund-site/77852800/>

Includes video newscast

EPA probes hole in cap at Superfund site  
The EPA is investigating.

Doug Miller, KHOU 11 News 5:21 p.m. CST December 23, 2015

HOUSTON - Work crews dispatched by the EPA spent Wednesday measuring the contours of a hole in the geomembrane that's supposed to prevent toxic dioxins from leaking out of the San Jacinto River waste pits.

Meanwhile, EPA officials welcomed to the entrance of the site a small delegation of neighbors, government officials and journalists asking about what's happening at the Superfund site.

"If you live in east Harris County, this is important to you," said Congressman Gene Green (D-Houston). "Whether you live in Highlands or here in Channelview, you ought to be concerned. You know, when I was in the sixties, I water skied here on this river. And people still do it."

The visit was cordial, but residents of the area who blame the toxic waste site for a cluster of cancer cases said the cap is inadequate and the carcinogenic chemicals buried at the site should be removed.

"We think that the only real solution is the removal of this dioxin," said Vince Ryan, the Harris County Attorney whose office has fought in court over the waste site. "This temporary cap, this breach in the temporary cap, I think, illustrates how dangerous this remains. If a hurricane came across this spot, who knows?"

Neighbors believe recent flooding ripped away part of the cap, which was supposed to be secured by tons of rocks.

"That's like when you cut yourself and you don't want blood or anything to get in your way, so you put a Band-Aid on it," said Doyce Bobo, who blames his prostate cancer on the Superfund site. "Then you go take a shower and it gets wet. Then guess what happens: The Band-Aid comes off. That's basically what's happening right here."

"It was just from a minor flood," Green said. "If we get another Hurricane Ike or something like that coming up here, we don't want that dioxin flowing into Galveston Bay."

The hole in the cap is the latest development in the long saga of a toxic waste site thousands of



9752398

drivers see every day as they pass over the San Jacinto River on Interstate 10. A now defunct paper mill in Pasadena stored what are now known to be toxic chemicals on the property, which eventually subsided into the river.

"This site was here for over four decades before any of us even knew about it," said Jackie Young, a former resident of the area who now heads a citizens' coalition dedicated to the issue. "When the site was discovered, folks were literally having picnics on top of the site."

Harris County sued International Paper and Waste Management for damages with mixed results. Although the county asked for roughly \$1.6-billion, it ended up with much less.

"We sued International Paper and Waste Management under Texas environmental laws," Ryan said. "We settled with Waste Management for almost \$30-million. We lost at trial with International Paper, but we're appealing that."

Once the EPA determines the contour of the hole, Green said, the agency plans to have it repaired early next year.

"To me, it's an emergency and we need to move as fast as we can," Green said.